



**European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)**  
**Press Release – 31 January 2005**

**Unions build strength in Europe's energy companies**

Governments in Romania and Bulgaria have privatised several companies that distribute electricity. These companies have been taken-over by large existing European companies which thus continue to build their energy empires. To consider the consequences for the workers and to discuss future strategies, trade union representatives from the companies concerned meet in Bucharest, 29 January to 1 February 2005. The seminar is organised by EPSU, the powerful European trade union federation representing workers in the European electricity and gas sector.

45 representatives from ENEL (Italy), EVN (Austria) Eon-Ruhrgas (Germany) GdF (France) CEZ (Czech Republic) meet for the three day seminar. They exchange information on the companies (principally: how does the company behave towards its workers and: Is the company financially in a good position) and the possible establishment of European Works Councils. Implications for collective bargaining will equally be considered. The unions end with detailed planning for future action.

It is the first seminar that brings together the different representatives of acquired and acquiring companies in the energy sector in the candidate countries.

“This is a demonstration of EPSU's conviction that there are no second class workers in Europe. If a European company takes over a company, it should include the representatives of its workers in the European Works Council, even if the country is not yet a member of the EU” said Jan Willem Goudriaan, Deputy General Secretary of EPSU. “EPSU stands by the trade unions in the candidate and other South East European countries that do not accept employers' legal arguments to treat some of its workers differently, so they can be exploited and denied the right to proper information and consultation which is granted to their EU work force”, he added.

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**EPSU** the European Federation of Public Service Unions is a member of the ETUC. 8 million workers organised in their 195 trade unions are members of EPSU. These workers deliver services to the public in health and social services, local, regional and central government, and the utilities in energy, water and waste. EPSU organises workers in both public and private companies including large transnational companies.

**Candidate countries:** Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Croatia.

**South East European countries:** The above plus Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia-Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo (UNMIK)

**European Works Council:** Unions and management of European companies negotiate an agreement that ensures that workers from different countries in which the companies operate can come together to discuss management's policies in the companies. The concept of European Works Councils is established in European law.

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